

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 /069 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5945
INFO AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

UNCLAS LONDON 11287

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK
SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVES EASILY HOLD SAFFRON WALDEN

1. AS EXPECTED, THE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE, ALAN
HASELHURST, SCORED AN EASY VICTORY IN THE JULY 7 SAF-
FRON WALDEN BY-ELECTION. HASELHURST SUBSTANTIALLY IN-
CREASED THE TORY MARGIN, NEARLY DOUBLING THE 6,500 VOTE
MARGIN REGISTERED IN THE 1974 GENERAL ELECTION. THE
TURNOUT WAS 65 PERCENT, 13 PERCENT LESS THAN AT THE
LAST GENERAL ELECTION.

2. THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THIS BY-ELECTION,
HOWEVER, WAS THE LIBERAL PERFORMANCE. HAVING FINISHED
SECOND IN THE LAST TWO GENERAL ELECTIONS, THEIR PER-
FORMANCE IN THE BY-ELECTION WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY
TO BE A BELLWETHER FOR RENEWAL OF THEIR PACT WITH THE
GOVERNMENT. IF THEY SLIPPED TO THIRD PLACE BEHIND
LABOR, PRESSURE ON LIBERAL LEADER STEEL TO ALLOW THE
PACT TO LAPSE THIS FALL WOULD BE INTENSE; IF THEY HELD
THEIR OWN OR EVEN INCREASED THEIR VOTE, THE BY-ELECTION
MIGHT PROVE A USEFUL ARGUMENT FOR EXTENSION OF THE
PACT. IN THE EVENT THE LIBERALS RETAINED THEIR POSI-
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TION, BUT THEIR SHARE OF THE TOTAL VOTE DECLINED BY 5
PERCENT, WHEN COMPARED WITH OCTOBER 1974.

3. LABOR REMAINED IN THIRD PLACE, AND SAW ITS SHARE OF
THE SAFFRON WALDEN VOTE DROP BY ELEVEN PERCENT. THE
EXTENT TO WHICH TACTICAL VOTING ON THE PART OF TRADI-
TIONAL LABOR VOTERS MAY HAVE AIDED THE LIBERALS IS NOT

CLEAR, BUT THE FACT THAT THE EROSION IN LABOR'S VOTE
APPROXIMATES THAT REGISTERED IN OTHER RECENT BY-ELEC-
TIONS SUGGESTS THAT TACTICAL VOTING WAS NOT A FACTOR.
AN INDEPENDENT, ANTI-EC CANDIDATE DREW 4 PERCENT OF
THE VOTE.
BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 08-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
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